



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Whole-School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	S N Muire agus Iosef
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Verbena Ave Bayside Sutton
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	19533Q
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	23/05/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	17/09/2024

What is a whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning?

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning reports on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. It affirms good practice and makes recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school.

How to read this report

During this inspection, the inspector(s) evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. The quality of pupils' learning
2. The quality of teaching
3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing
4. The quality of leadership and management
5. The quality of school self-evaluation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:	
<i>Child Protection</i>	<i>Anti-bullying</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023).5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools (revised 2023).6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> or <i>Bí Cineálta (2024)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.3. The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment in line with their current policy.4. All teachers visited report that they have read the school's current policy on anti-bullying and that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and tackling bullying.

<p>information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, (revised 2023).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="256 277 842 405">7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE).<li data-bbox="256 405 842 470">8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.	
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Whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning

Date of inspection	23/05/2024
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team (ISM)• Meeting with representatives of the board of management• Meeting with parent representatives• Meetings with teachers• Review of relevant documents• Pupil focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives

School context

Scoil Náisiúnta Muire agus Iosef, Sinsear is a mixed senior primary school located in Sutton, Co. Dublin. It is under the patronage of the Dublin Archdiocese. At the time of the evaluation, there were 412 pupils enrolled. Staffing comprised an administrative principal, sixteen mainstream teachers and the six special education teaching (SETs) positions were staffed by ten teachers operating in a job-share capacity. There has been significant turnover of staff in the leadership and management roles in the school; this has, however, stabilised over the last five years.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning was very good; pupils demonstrated a very positive image of themselves as capable learners.
- Pupils' digital skills were excellent.
- The quality of teaching was of a very high standard.
- The quality of pupils' wellbeing was very good with aspects of excellence also observed.
- The quality of leadership and management was excellent.
- School self-evaluation was of an exceptionally high standard.

Recommendations

- School leadership and teachers should review the delivery of supplementary support to ensure it is aligned with Circular 13/2017 and informed by patterns of prioritised pupils' needs.
- Ba chóir do na múinteoirí deiseanna breise a chur ar fáil do na daltaí a stór focal agus a scileanna teanga a úsáid i gcomhthéacsanna éagsúla chun a gcumas sa teanga a fhorbairt go céimniúil. *Teachers should provide further opportunities for pupils to use their vocabulary and language skills in different contexts to develop their language ability incrementally.*

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

- The quality of pupils' learning was very good. Pupils demonstrated a very positive image of themselves as capable learners and they clearly articulated their thoughts, opinions and listened attentively to the contributions of their peers. Across many subjects, pupils demonstrated ownership of their learning and took responsibility for improving their work.
- Pupils experienced an integrated curriculum and displayed very good ability in transferring and in applying skills learned in one curricular area to another. Pupils' confidence in the writing genre and their use of graphic organisers supported them as they worked as historians, geographers, scientists and artists on individual and collaborative projects. They articulated the various skills they engaged with in their learning and explained very effectively how they researched information and how they interpreted, reported and presented this information. In one class, a creative arts notebook provided as an excellent stimulus for pupils to explore and connect with their learning. Pupils demonstrated curiosity and very good interest in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), in particular their local environment. It was highly commendable that the school has introduced an annual science festival where all pupils investigate scientific concepts and present their findings to parents and the wider community.
- Cé go raibh cur chuige cumarsáideach scilbhunaithe le sonrú freisin i mionlach suntasach de na ceachtanna i dteagasc na Gaeilge, ní raibh sé ina ghné d'fhórmhór na gceachtanna a breathnaíodh. Bhí sé le moladh sna ceachtanna a breathnaíodh go raibh deiseanna ag na daltaí teanga an cheachta a úsáid agus go raibh tuiscint mhaith ag formhór na ndaltaí ar an nGaeilge. Ní raibh, áfach, muinín acu ina gcumas féin an stór focal nua nó na focail a bhí réamhfhoghlamtha acu a úsáid chun abairtí a chruthú go neamhspleách nó an teanga a úsáid go bríoch. Ní mór do mhúinteoirí ar bhonn scoile uile, béim a chur ar struchtúr na teanga agus deiseanna rialta a thabhairt do na daltaí an teanga a chleachtadh chun comhrá a dhéanamh go neamhspleách. Ba chóir do na múinteoirí deiseanna breise a chur ar fáil do na daltaí a stór focal agus a scileanna teanga a úsáid i gcomhthéacsanna éagsúla chun a gcumas sa teanga a fhorbairt go céimíúil. Sa ghrúpa fócais, luaigh ionadaithe na ndaltaí go raibh cluichí cumarsáide tairbheach chun a gcumas sa Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn. *While a skill-based communicative approach was also evident for the teaching of Irish in a significant minority of lessons, it was not a feature of most lessons observed. Students had opportunities to use the language of the lesson and the majority of the pupils had a good understanding of Irish. They did not, however, trust in their own ability to use the new vocabulary or words they had pre-learned to create sentences independently or to use the language meaningfully. Teachers should provide further opportunities for pupils to use their vocabulary and language skills in different contexts to develop their language ability incrementally. In the focus group, pupil representatives noted that communication games were beneficial in promoting their Irish language ability.*
- Of note were the digital skills pupils had developed to produce high quality projects and presentations in their digital school bags. Pupils could, with ease, explain a wide variety of functions and articulate learning from across the curriculum through the school's digital learning policy. The focus on incremental skill development, as evident in this policy, and as demonstrated by pupils' competency levels, was excellent. Pupils were immensely proud of this work.

2. The quality of teaching

- The quality of teaching was of a very high standard. Teachers revised prior learning, used a variety of approaches to introduce new content, had high expectations and communicated these consistently to pupils, both orally and in written form. Almost all teachers provided learners with meaningful and active learner experiences which

motivated and engaged pupils. These very effective teaching approaches should be extended across the school and all teachers should enable all pupils to understand the value of making mistakes and use them as learning opportunities. Classroom environments were stimulating, supportive and inclusive.

- The quality of assessment was very good with excellent practice observed in a few classrooms. All teachers regularly checked for understanding, encouraged pupils to use self-assessment strategies and provided regular feedback to pupils. Where excellent assessment practices were observed, conferencing and written feedback, which were appropriately linked to pupils' self-assessment, resulted in a shared understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. In these instances, progression was very clear. In pupil surveys, most pupils agreed that their teacher helped them to improve their work. The gathering and analysis of assessment data in literacy and numeracy was very effective. There was scope to further analyse the data from individual strands in standardised tests or error analysis in numeracy to identify and target specific areas for improvement.
- The quality of support for pupils with additional needs was highly commendable. Teachers collaborated to provide rich, holistic learner experiences, including learning through groupwork and active learning. It was very effective practice that parental input was a significant feature of student-support plans. Targets were very clear and regular monitoring and review of targets demonstrated a positive impact on pupils' progression. Special needs assistants (SNA) contributed very positively to the care and inclusion of pupils with additional needs. School leadership and teachers should review the delivery of supplementary support to ensure it is aligned with Circular 13/2017 and informed by patterns of prioritised pupils' need.

3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing

- The quality of pupils' wellbeing was very good with aspects of excellence also observed. Teachers affirmed and celebrated pupils' work in curricular and extra-curricular activities. It was highly commendable that a strategic, equitable and comprehensive whole-school approach was in place for extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils were exemplary in their behaviour, their attitudes and their dispositions to learning. The school song and school crest represented the strong connection and belonging that all pupils have for their school and local community.
- There was an excellent focus on pupil voice and various committees were elected democratically and annually with representatives from each year group. Their autonomy, involvement in decision-making processes, and confidence in this approach to support school development, were highly commendable. Pupils led data collection in areas such as electricity usage, inclusive activities during recreational time and school facilities for all pupils. This data was used to implement change that resulted in visible improvements to the school's physical, cultural and inclusive environment.
- In the pupil focus group interview, pupils spoke very positively about their use of the outdoor spaces and their love for the school, the principal and their teachers. They also reported that kindness was a value demonstrated by all pupils and staff every day. In survey results, almost all pupils reported that both children and teachers have respect for everybody all the time.
- Transitions from the junior school to the senior school were very successful. The very high levels of collaboration between both staffs effectively supported all pupils as they continued their educational journey. The school had worked very conscientiously with local post-primary schools and had robust structures in place, which facilitated the effective transition of all pupils, most particularly pupils with additional needs.

4. The quality of leadership and management

- The quality of leadership and management was excellent. The principal had exceptional organisational and management skills. The focus on developing leadership capacity amongst all staff members was notable and a majority of teachers outside of the ISM were engaged in leadership roles in the school. All teachers were facilitated to access professional learning and share their individual expertise with other teachers in a supportive manner.
- A systematic approach to effective communication amongst and between staff, pupils and parents was in place and included the highly effective use of newsletters, notice boards and an online platform. Structures were in place at staff meetings to ensure that all voices contributed to the functioning, decision-making and progression of learning and teaching in the school. Minutes of staff meetings, ISM meetings, BOM meetings were all aligned in their approach and very clearly documented the unified commitment to the pupils in the school.
- It was highly commendable that the roles and responsibilities of the ISM team were aligned to the priorities of the school and in accordance with the Looking At Our School quality framework. The ISM was highly capable and successful in leading positive change across the school.
- The board of management provided very good governance and oversight, and it discharged its responsibilities very effectively. Members of the board worked collaboratively to ensure that the school was a safe and well-maintained learning environment. The board was very well informed on all school developments.
- The officers of the parents' association reported that they appreciated the welcoming and supportive atmosphere in the school. The parents' association attended regular meetings with school leaders and assisted the school in the review of school policies and organisation of events.
- The school developed and nurtured strong partnerships with the wider school community. Responses to the parent surveys indicated that the school was welcoming and that their child was treated fairly and respectfully. The school had well established procedures in place to assist in the training and induction of student and newly qualified teachers.

5. The quality of school self-evaluation

- School self-evaluation was of an exceptionally high standard. School leadership had adopted a collaborative approach to informing school improvement, consulting with pupils, parents and teachers in identifying areas for development. Teaching and learning in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Science formed the focus of the current SSE cycle. A very comprehensive improvement plan had been devised, clearly delineating targets and corresponding success criteria. It was highly commendable that a whole-school approach had been adopted in monitoring the implementation of agreed actions and reflective practice informed any necessary adjustments to implementation. It was visible that the SSE process, from previous cycles such as Digital Strategy and current cycles, was impacting very positively on teaching and learning.
- It was noteworthy that teachers demonstrated an ongoing commitment to continuing professional development (CPD). This was very much supported and promoted by the board of management and leadership. Teachers and SNAs availed of CPD opportunities, which were aligned to the priority needs of the school and enhanced teaching and learning for all.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board welcomes the very positive findings of the report, the very good quality of pupils' learning and wellbeing, excellent digital skills and the very high standard of the quality of teaching. We commend the staff for their high expectations for pupils, meaningful and active learner experiences, very good assessment practices and stimulating, supportive and inclusive classrooms that they provide.

The Board is delighted that the quality of leadership and management was noted as excellent, with school self-evaluation of an exceptionally high standard.

We acknowledge the highly commended support for pupils with additional needs and thank the support staff who collaborate to provide the rich, holistic learner experiences noted.

The Board is very proud of our pupils, who were observed to be exemplary in their behaviour and attitudes to learning.

All of this is supported by the strong partnerships with the wider school community which was acknowledged, in the report.

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

The Board is delighted to note that only two recommendations were made following the WSE. The Board can report that the support teaching staff have met with the principal, to review the delivery of supplementary support to ensure that it is aligned with Circular 13/2017 and will work with pupils, parents, staff and the Board, to best deploy our resources based on each pupil's individual learning needs.

The Board is pleased that the report notes that the majority of pupils had a good understanding of Irish and will support the staff to provide further opportunities to use their vocabulary and language skills in different contexts to build on their existing skills. The staff will also continue to work with pupil representatives to identify the communication games that they find beneficial to promote their Irish language ability.

The Board will continue to use the school self-evaluation process, which was reported as being of an exceptionally high standard in our school, to implement any necessary improvements in a targeted and collaborative way.

In conclusion, the Board would like to thank all members of staff and the school community for their positive engagement throughout the WSE process. The Board wishes to endorse the report which encapsulates the excellence of Scoil Náisiúnta Muire agus Iosef Sinsear.

The Inspectorate's Quality Continuum

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	Provision that is very good is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective